

EXHIBIT A

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Danielle Costanzo Bonavita

January 16, 2024

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

My name is Danielle Costanzo Bonavita. John Costanzo Jr, or as he is known to those who love him most, John-o, is my only sibling and my younger brother. I am writing to plead for your leniency in his sentencing. John-o is an extremely loyal, generous, loving and supportive son, brother, uncle, grandson, godfather, nephew and friend.

Writing a letter to a judge on my brother's behalf is the most surreal, terrifying, and unexpected task of my life. The Costanzos are a Department of Justice family. My father, John Costanzo Sr., was a DEA Special Agent for almost 30 years. Our small, tight-knit family takes immense pride in being a part of the DOJ and DEA. It was, and still remains, a significant part of our family's identity.

As little kids our Dad was transferred to the U.S. Consulate in Milan. It was there that John-o got his nickname, "John-o from Milano". Growing up, John-o and I never fully understood what my Dad's job really entailed, we just knew that he was fighting the "bad guys" and that it was dangerous. We could sense my mother's fear and stress as my father would go for weeks long "business trips", or as we later discovered undercover operations and we knew that we would not hear from him until he returned. When my Dad retired in 1995, I felt a weight lifted off of my shoulders and a huge sense of relief. And then in 2004 when John-o decided to leave the Secret Service to join the DEA as a Special Agent, I felt that crushing terror bare down on me again.

In 1999, John-o had joined the Secret Service and was a rising star within the agency. My family and I were so proud of him. Travelling around the world with President Clinton and President George W. Bush, and making a name for himself dismantling high-profile money laundering schemes. While I knew being a Secret Service agent was also laden with risk and danger, I somehow convinced myself that it was safer than diving into the dark underbelly of drug lord "bad guys". So, in 2004, when John-o announced that he was leaving the Secret Service to join the DEA, I was secretly crushed. Of course, as the protective older sister, I wanted to pull him aside and knock some sense into him, but when I saw the deep sense of pride he took in carrying on my father's legacy and in his words, "making the world a little safer for his nieces," I smiled and kept my mouth shut.

Now in my 30s I fully understood the dangers of John-o's job, but I took immense joy in watching him shine. From disrupting local Miami drug hierarchies, to infiltrating Colombian drug families to helping rid the world of the evils of El Chapo, to testifying before the Congressional Sub-Committee on the connection between money laundering and Fentanyl distribution, to briefing the Panamanian attorney general on strategies to dismantle the money laundering tactics of the Narcos. John-o's contributions to the US and global war against drugs are immense. He loved his work, was really good at it, and took pride in taking "bad guys" off the streets to make the world a little bit safer for my four children, his nieces, and nephew.

From a very young age, my children, Juliana, S [REDACTED], A [REDACTED] and F [REDACTED] [REDACTED], have known Uncle John-o as their protector, a sort of superhero. My four kids adore and admire their Uncle John-o. He is their confidant, their advisor and their friend. Each of them turn to him for advice with problems they don't want to discuss with their parents, guidance on health, fitness, and social issues. Amid a materialistic Miami culture, John-o helps to ensure my kids remain grounded and grateful for their blessings. He takes them to volunteer in inner city neighborhoods, and exposes them to the importance of helping those who are suffering from illness or are less fortunate than them. F [REDACTED], a junior in high school is particularly close to his Uncle John-o. F [REDACTED] aims to play Division 1 soccer, and looks to his Uncle John-o as a role model as my brother played football at Elon University. Uncle John-o has helped F [REDACTED] with developing confidence, focus and strength both mental and physical, and the "eye of the tiger" as they refer to it. Thanks in part to John-o's attention and devotion, F [REDACTED] is a scholar-athlete that balances intense academics with high level soccer to set him on a path to achieve his goal of playing soccer at a top academic Division 1 school.

Not only is John-o an involved and caring uncle and brother, he is also a dedicated, patient and loyal son.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. His complete dedication to my mother and father allows me to breathe a little easier as I juggle the demands of being a good daughter to my parents, an involved and attentive mother to my four children, and a supportive wife to my husband.

These past two years have been humbling, agonizing, and traumatic. In the face of intense adversity, we have grown as a family and fought through the heartbreak together, thanks to John-o's love, support and positivity. John-o is my only sibling. We face a rocky road as my father's battle with cancer vacillates up and down. My mother, father and I rely on John-o's emotional and physical support to get through this intense battle we face as a family.

Over the past two years, John-o has suffered immeasurable loss. He has lost his career, his ability to earn income, his identity. I liken his fall from grace to that of Icarus, as they both flew too close to the sun and got burned. Throughout this humiliating experience, John-o has held his head high, infected us with his positivity, and taken care of all of us.

I was present in the courthouse for the final days of my brother's trial. The Prosecution's portrayal of my brother's character could not be farther from the truth. My Dad and brother have spent a lifetime fighting the "bad guys". I can tell you from the bottom of my heart that John-o is not a "bad guy" he is one of the very few good ones.

I respectfully ask that as you evaluate my brother's sentencing, you please take into consideration all of the good he has done for our country, his friends and colleagues, and our family, and that you grant my brother as much time as possible to spend with my father, his idol, as he approaches the final days of his life.

Sincerely,



Danielle Costanzo Bonavita

John A. Costanzo

December 11, 2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken:

I write to you as the father of John A. Costanzo, Jr, who is the pride of my life. John has provided me many proud moments. One that is high on my list of his accomplishments is the day I presented him his badge and credentials when entering the Drug Enforcement Administration as a Special Agent. As a former DEA Special Agent myself with a 29-year career of service this moment sticks out the most (aside from the day he was born) as it is viewed as a legacy moment in the eyes of many former Agents.

John is an individual of the highest integrity. He always has his priorities in order. His most important priority is family. John is not married and has no children however his sister has four children, all Generation "Z", two in colleges and two about to enter. He is a constant force in their lives where he mentors them as well as physically trains them and keeps them on the "straight and narrow" especially in today's culture of social media.

He has been especially helpful to me in my time of need.

He supports me in this journey never giving up hope. I am very grateful for this support.

John's second life priority is his friends of which he has many. John is always there when a friend needs something in dealing with the smallest of problems to the severest. His friends are life long and in constant contact

with him often on a daily basis. Even today given his present situation no one has deserted him. John is always the first to offer help. He volunteers at food banks and provides assistance to other charities especially those of the church.

Now we come to John's third priority and that is DEA. John started his law enforcement career first as a local police officer then the U.S. secret Service and then finally DEA having completed 25 years of government service. He is known as a hard working Special Agent with the highest integrity. His efforts in enforcing the federal narcotics laws while based in Miami, FL led to the immobilization of several large-scale international trafficking organizations based in Colombia and Central America.

John and I have an extremely close relationship. I believe this is because of the career path we have both chosen. Many discussions between DEA people will make no sense to the non-law enforcement person. For this reason I believe John and I have this close bond because we understand each other completely.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to a concerned father.

Sincerely



John A Costanzo

Elaine B. Costanzo



Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

01/04/2024

Dear Judge Oetken,

Being John's mother is truly the greatest gift and blessing of my life! He is such a beautiful soul, gentle, kind, caring and giving to all. Always inclusive and ready to fight for the underdog. John is a lover of animals and has a strong respect and admiration for St. Francis of Assisi. His empathy and intuition for people's feelings separate him from the pack. John is the glue that holds our family together. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and John has been his rock from the start. In spite of his own problems of late, he has never missed a beat with his dad's needs bringing sunshine and optimism. Family is everything to him and not only blood relatives. He epitomizes what friendship means, loyal to a fault. We have never had a holiday dinner without friends or colleagues who were alone or unable to be with their families. John has numerous times gone into difficult neighborhoods delivering food and toys for the underprivileged of our community. This is his greatest joy. He dedicated himself to DEA, putting himself in danger but he believed in the cause and was proud to continue his father's legacy. He regularly received outstanding evaluations and many awards. John is truly a man of his word and an asset to our world. Anyone who has had the pleasure of meeting my son, John, has truly been blessed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elaine B. Costanzo".

Elaine B. Costanzo

Juliana Bonavita



Honorable J. Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall, U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Honorable Judge Oetken,

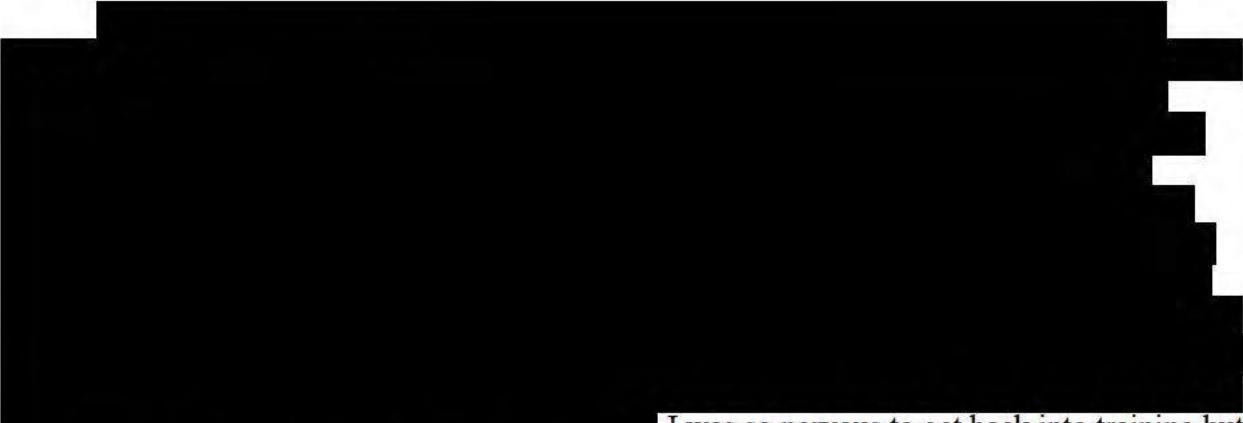
My name is Juliana Bonavita. I am the niece and goddaughter of John Costanzo Jr., or as I know him, Uncle John-o. I am writing to you to beg for your leniency as you consider my Uncle John-o's sentencing.

My Uncle John-o has been in my life since the moment I was born. As a baby, Uncle John-o was always there to change my diapers and babysit me. Growing up, my siblings and I viewed him as a superhero, idolizing his life and role as a special agent. To us, our Uncle John-o was, and still is, the strongest and bravest person we know. Uncle John-o told us stories about his life as a Secret Service and DEA Agent and how he traveled around the world to stop the "bad guys;" he was our real-life superhero. As we grew older and wiser, we eventually learned that our Uncle was not a superhero like the ones on movie screens, however, a real life one. I define a hero as someone who gives himself, often putting his own life at great risk, for the greater good of others. My Uncle John-o definitely put his own life at risk to serve his nation as both a Secret Service Agent and a DEA Agent but he also does everything in his power to support the ones he loves, specifically, my siblings and I; always placing our needs before his own.

When I was 10 years old and starting middle school, Uncle John-o gifted me my first ever phone. I will never forget him walking into my house with a huge grin on his face exclaiming, "Juliana, I have a surprise for you!". Tucked under the back of his shirt was my new white I-phone 4 with a bedazzled pink home button encased in a bright pink and blue case. He knew how to make my phone "fashionable" for school. I was so nervous to start middle school but felt unstoppable and grown up with my new phone from Uncle John-o. Not only did he buy me the phone, but he also added me to his phone plan and paid for my service. When I used up our joint monthly data in the span of a week, Uncle John-o never complained, he instead taught me the importance of responsibility. Although it took me a while to learn how to manage my data, he paid for my service for years and even bought me my second phone in high school.

When I was 15 years old and eager to learn how to drive, Uncle John-o volunteered to help teach me. One night, as I drove us around the streets of Miami he directed me to I-95, one of the most dangerous roads in the country. As we merged onto the intimidating highway, I panicked and began doubting myself. I wasn't ready to drive on the highway, what was Uncle John-o thinking?! In the midst of my panic, Uncle John-o remained calm and steadfast. He assured me that he believed in me and that I was ready to conquer I-95. On our ride together,

Uncle John-o taught me the values of patience and self discipline behind the wheel. The rush of the wind and other passing engines and the blur of the Miami skyline was overwhelming at first, but Uncle John-o helped me relax and focus. Balancing the faster driving pace, checking my mirrors, maintaining a set speed, and being spatially aware was daunting, yet, I felt safe and secure with Uncle John-o by my side.



I was so nervous to get back into training but Uncle John-o drove me to my first session, stayed with me the whole time, and calmed all my nerves. Towards the end of my recovery period, Uncle John-o took me on runs with him to build back my stamina. Three times a week we ran side-by-side, running, walking, and sprinting together. When I was winded and felt I could not run anymore, Uncle John-o pushed me to dig deeper and keep running even when I felt I could not. Through this grueling experience, my Uncle John-o taught me the value of mental and physical toughness, and the importance of believing in myself.

When I was 18 years old and started college at the University of Florida, Uncle John-o called to check in on me regularly. One weekend during my Freshman year, I was desperately homesick and did not have a car with me at school. Determined to get home and see my family, I took an eight hour Greyhound bus ride from Gainesville to Miami. The bus ride was uncomfortable, tiresome, and nauseating. After a short 48 hours home, it was time for me to head back to school on the bus. Uncle John-o cleared his Sunday schedule and insisted on driving me back to Gainesville, even though he knew it took five hours one way, because he did not want me to suffer through another 8 hour bus ride in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. We drove up to Gainesville together, he dropped me off at my dorm, made sure I had everything I needed and turned around and drove another five hours back to Miami. I was so grateful for the ride but even more grateful for the five extra hours I spent with my uncle.

I am now 21 years old entering my final semester at UF, and I need my Uncle John-o now more than ever. There is a lot of anxiety that comes with graduating college, I am at a pivotal point in my life where the unknown is both exciting yet terrifying. I graduated high school in 2020 during the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic from my living room sofa with my Uncle John-o sitting next to me. He promised me then that he would make my college graduation extra special to make up for the unfortunate end to my senior year. I want more than anything for my Uncle John-o to be present at my first real graduation come May 2024 as I walk across the stage at the University of Florida.

I realize that I am extremely lucky, because having an uncle as present, caring, and loving as John-o is a privilege not every child experiences. Uncle John-o is my pillar, he supports me when I cannot support myself. I am eternally grateful for all the ways Uncle John-o impacted my life and the valuable lessons he taught me that I will always carry with me. However, I am not done learning from him. My life is only just beginning, and to take my Uncle away for any period of time would be to seriously deprive my three younger siblings and I of all of his deep wisdom, love, and generosity. Over the years, he surpassed his role as uncle, he is a friend, a mentor, a second-father, and a hero. In our eyes, our Uncle John-o will always be our hero and without him, I would not be who I am today.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Juliana Bonavita

Francesco Bonavita, Ph. D.

[REDACTED]

November 28, 2023

The Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Re: Character Reference for John Costanzo Jr.

Dear Judge Oetken,

It is with deep conviction that I am writing to provide a character reference for John Costanzo Jr., who is appearing before you in court. John Costanzo is my son's brother-in-law and a loving uncle to my four grandchildren. I have had the privilege of knowing him for over two decades, and I am honored to share my perspective on his character.

First and foremost, I would like to emphasize his exceptional altruism and unwavering dedication to helping others. As a son, he exhibits profound love and support for his parents, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He has gone above and beyond to attend to their needs, demonstrating unconditional love and providing moral and emotional strength in difficult times.

As an uncle, he has been a positive influence and role model for his nephew and nieces. He has been instrumental in their growth and character development. His guidance and support have enabled them to excel in school, sports and to actively contribute to their community. They adore uncle John and know that they can count on him. His family holds him in high regard, and he is loved by his sister and admired by countless friends who trust and rely on him.

I could enumerate many instances during which John demonstrated the intrinsic quality of his character, but there is one episode that stands out in my mind. Two years ago, when we were visiting Miami, my mother-in-law, who was 96 years of

age at the time, suffered a wrist fracture. As soon as John found out that *nonna* had an accident, he dropped his social commitment on a Saturday night to take her to the emergency room, where she stayed for several hours. This is truly remarkable how John prioritized my mother-in-law's well-being over his own social commitment. This is not only an act of kindness and dedication for the care of an elderly person, rather it is also heartwarming to see such genuine compassion for people who encounter hardship.

Moreover, I would like to highlight John Costanzo's remarkable professional achievements. He has served as a secret service agent, entrusted with protecting President Bill Clinton during his term in office. In this role, he fearlessly placed his life on the line, driven by his deep love for his country and unwavering allegiance to the United States Constitution.

In addition, John Costanzo spent nearly two decades as a dedicated DEA agent. His tireless efforts and relentless pursuit of justice have led to the arrest of numerous dangerous drug dealers, including the notorious head of the Mexican drug cartel, El Chapo. His commitment to upholding the law and ensuring the safety of our communities is truly commendable.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that John is a loving, loyal, and patriotic individual who firmly believes in the principles of democracy. His selflessness, integrity, and dedication to serving others make him an exceptional individual deserving of your consideration. What I admire most in John is that he is a good human being. His giving and helpful nature is not restricted to his family, but it extends to friends, co-workers and his community. I have no doubt that he will continue to contribute positively to society given the opportunity.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Should you require any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I have full faith in your wisdom and judgment as you consider my nephew's case.

Sincerely,



Francesco Bonavita, Ph. D.

Michael A. Bonavita

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Monday, March 18, 2024

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Subject: Letter of Character for John Costanzo

Dear Judge Oetken,

I am writing this letter in support of John Costanzo. I have known John for 29 years and have had the privilege of witnessing his outstanding character and integrity firsthand. First and foremost, I want to highlight John's dedication and compassion towards his elderly family members. He has spent countless hours assisting them with various challenging tasks, demonstrating his selflessness and willingness to go the extra mile to help others. His commitment to family values and support is truly commendable. Furthermore, I can confidently attest to John's honesty and trustworthiness. He has always conducted himself with the utmost integrity in all aspects of his life. His moral compass is unwavering, and his actions consistently align with his principles. In addition to his family commitments, John has also shown remarkable dedication to his friends and loved ones. He consistently goes above and beyond to offer support, whether it be through lending a listening ear, providing assistance, or simply being there in times of need. His selflessness and willingness to put others before himself are truly admirable qualities.

One of the most significant ways John has impacted my life is through his unwavering support for my health and well-being. Despite his busy schedule, he always made time to accompany me to the gym and ensure I stayed on track with my weight loss journey. His guidance, motivation, and genuine concern for my well-being were invaluable, and I am eternally grateful for his unwavering support. Moreover, during my struggles with my business, John played a pivotal role in its success. He not only purchased my products and services but also actively recommended them to others. His belief in my abilities and his consistent support played a significant role in overcoming the initial hurdles I faced. It is

worth mentioning that John has never prioritized his personal interests over his family commitments. He has never missed a family function, dinner, or outing, always ensuring that he was present to support and celebrate with his loved ones.

Lastly, I want to emphasize that John's dedication to helping others is not limited to his immediate circle. He has gone out of his way to support individuals in need, such as myself, without expecting anything in return. His generosity and unconditional help are a testament to his character and the values he holds dear. In conclusion, I firmly believe that John is an exceptional individual who possesses the qualities of honesty, selflessness, and unwavering support for others. I kindly request you to take these factors into consideration when making your judgment. If there is any further information or clarification that you require, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michael A. Bonavita

November 22, 2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

My name is Richard A. Fiano and I am a retired 42-year veteran law enforcement officer. I have spent almost 35 years in federal law enforcement, 30 of which were with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and 7 years with a county police agency. I retired from the DEA as a former Chief of Operations in 2005.

I have known John Costanzo Jr. since approximately 1981 when he was about 6 or 7 years old. However, I have known his father since 1975 when I first entered on duty in New York with the DEA. Later, John Sr. and his family were reassigned to the DEA office in Milan, Italy. In 1981, I was involved in a 3-month long anti-drug operation with the Italian police services. I traveled to Milan to visit John Sr. and spend a few days with him, his wife Elaine, daughter Danielle and John Jr who was kind enough to give up his bed for me for my entire stay in Milan.

While I do respect the jury's verdict, I am writing to offer a more complete picture of who John Jr is. In short, I have nothing but positive things to say about John Jr. Since first meeting him in Milan, his family and ours have remained very close and I have kept an eye on John Jr. throughout his scholastic and law enforcement careers. During the period when both of our families lived in Virginia, I saw John Jr. several times a month and followed his academic pursuits at Lake Braddock High School before attending Pinecrest High School in Ft Lauderdale, Florida while his family returned to an overseas assignment. After graduating high school, I followed both his academic and football pursuits at Elon College in North Carolina. Never did I hear of any derogatory issues involving his character, relationships with family members or other students.

After graduating college, John Jr's sole ambition was to join the DEA. However, at the time DEA was not accepting recently graduated applicants without any police or military experience. So, in 1994, John Jr. applied for, was accepted and graduated the academy for the Indian Creek Police Department in South Florida. In 1997, he applied for, was accepted and graduated from the United States Secret Service Academy. Spending the next 7 years with the USSS and undeterred from his lifelong dream of becoming a DEA Special Agent, he applied for, was accepted and successfully graduated the DEA Academy in 2004. During this time, I had witnessed tremendous personal growth and maturity in John Jr. He became a subject matter expert in Attorney General Exempt Operations (AGEO) as well as undercover money-

laundering operations. Although long retired, I remain in close contact with many in the DEA and can honestly say that I have never heard any derogatory comments about John Jr.

I can confirm that in the 42 years I have known John Jr, he has been a trustworthy, reliable and dedicated public servant and a very decent person. He has a stable and supportive Christian family and his upbringing reflects that. He has always shown a deep respect for his family, the rule of law and for his friends and colleagues.

I hope you consider my comments in your deliberations.

Respectfully,

Richard A. Fiano

Richard A. Fiano

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Judge Oetken,

Two words come to mind when I think of my friend, my brother, of nearly two decades; family and generosity.

I met John at the gym, imagine that, through a mutual friend and trainer almost twenty years ago. The three of us became quickly inseparable, but John and I developed a bond that went much deeper, similar values, motivations, and life philosophy.

What struck me about him was his unbelievably strong connection to his family.

His love and respect for his parents, his constant involvement in the lives of his nieces and nephew were so impressive.

I remember the first Sunday dinner with John and his family at his parents home, food, lots of it..Italians you know, red wine,

multiple conversations going on at once, absolutely enjoyable controlled chaos.

And there was John, watching, observing, with a deep look of satisfaction on his face. This is what life is about, friends, family, food!

I knew that that look of satisfaction was in knowing that his family would love and accept me as he had, and that this would become one of many Sunday family dinners with Dr. Paulie(aka, the doc), a name bestowed upon me by John and his entire family, at mom and pops house.

John spends much of his time helping others, always trying to do what's necessary to make their lives easier.

When I got covid last year ,without hesitation, he arrived at my house with bags of groceries, including homemade lentil soup that he had his mom make for me(it's amazing btw).

He stood outside the door and just chatted for as long as I could muster the energy, focused on distracting me from how crappy I felt, it was the highlight of my infirmed day!

And this ritual continued until I was feeling well enough to get out on my own. I'm not confirming or denying that I may have stretched it out a few days longer than I needed to...but seeing my buddy, joking, laughing about how grimy I looked, and my daily dose of home made soup was not easy to give up....

From my house he rushed to his nieces soccer game (with three nieces and a nephew, all of whom are great athletes, in large part due to Uncle John's mentoring)

[REDACTED]

You want to know who John Costanzo is, this is him, in the nutshell. I am proud, honored and deeply grateful to be able to call him my friend, my brother, and that he is such a huge part of my life.

These last two years have been probably the most challenging time in John's, as well as his loved ones, lives. I know his sense of pride and satisfaction in all the good and important work he has done for so long has been wounded, and though it has been draining, emotionally and financially, he has been determined to clear his good name.

He has become more introspective, and though one might expect for someone faced with these challenges to become self absorbed, his generosity has soared. His willingness to do and help others has been further amplified.

It's been pretty amazing to witness.

I humbly ask that you consider this humble man that I have known, loved and respected for twenty years, a man who deeply loves his country and his family and has dedicated his life to making us all safer, in considering his sentence.

Thank you,

Paul Pugliese

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear, Judge Oetken

My name is Susana Rueda. I was born in Medellin, Colombia. As a young teenager my family and I fled the ruthless reign of Pablo Escobar and took refuge in this great country. As a child I was exposed to things no child should ever endure. It would be so ironic that 12 years after the United States embraced my family and I, I would fall in love with DEA Special Agent John Costanzo Jr.

In March of 2011 I met John. My life was forever changed. I was a single mother of one, not looking for a relationship, but it was something about John I couldn't get enough of and I away from, something about him was special and unique. My first thought when I was introduced to John was "for once a meet a man who genuinely wants to make a difference in this world". He has this energy to him that words cannot describe. My first instinct was to run, for that energy was so foreign to me, but after I got to know him, I couldn't walk away from a person who is so passionate, giving and loyal to the things he believes in. For the first few months of dating John kept his profession extremely vague, I would understand why in time, the only thing I knew was the love, commitment, loyalty and integrity he had for those three letters "DEA" for it was his life and all he knew since he was little, it was his entire world.

When John came into our lives, my son was two years of age. John showed my son love, embraced him and submerge myself and my son into his family. John has many loves, his family being his greatest love and his dad his biggest admiration and role model. There isn't anything John wouldn't do for his family or friends. If one is so lucky to enter John's orbit, he never let's go.

This country has offered me way too much. I enlisted in the Air Force at the age of 18, which allowed me to serve this country and to get a higher education. I am truly grateful for the United States, and I know John loved that quality in me. John loved the fact that I served, whenever he introduced me to someone in his world one of the first things he would state is "she served in the Air Force" and he knew how important it was to me as well.

As I stated before John shielded me from one of his true loves the DEA. In time I would get to know her very well. My family and I ran from the very thing John was running towards. Although I didn't agree how the US government was approaching the war on drugs, I admired John's conviction. I survived that dark world; I saw the side of it that most DEA agents don't ever see. John and I discussed at length my

childhood and the atrocities I was exposed to as a little girl. The special thing about John is he is so open minded and willing to learn from others and apply those lessons to his own life, it was beautiful to watch. His passion and compassion for the people he was going after was beautiful and painful to observe. I watched him achieve his investigative objectives, and I also watched him in pain, for he knew his job was helping people but at the same time hurting others. That's where I struggle with the War on drugs. Many see the victories DEA achieve, but with every victory innocent people suffer, and John knew this. But I also believe this gift John has made him an incredible agent. I was privileged to meet many agents from all over, and was proud of how they all loved and admired John.

John is a passionate person he doesn't know how to do something halfway. If he believes he is doing good, he is all in.

John follows in the footsteps of his father who is John's ultimate hero. The way John speaks of his family but especially his father is incredible, every father should be so lucky to have a son like John. John is not the typical man, his respect for his family is something out of a fairytale. One of his more attractive qualities is the love he has for his family, which is something to envy.

John is a true father figure to my son; I thought in the beginning of our relationship he would struggle bonding with my him, but it wasn't the case; he has instilled incredible values in him who is now 15. My son looks up to him and loves him unconditionally.

John's kryptonite is his pride, I watched him go through this process, he never once complained nor hide in a corner. He holds his head up high even when the press writes disgusting lies about the man I came to admire. No matter what, I know John will rise from this moment in time, he does not know how to fail, his DNA is unmatchable.

I respectfully submit this Character letter to your Honor.

Please if you need any further information or would like to discuss John in person, I am more than willing to do so.

Respectfully,

Susana Rueda

Cellular number: [REDACTED]

Dear Judge Oetken,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my best friend, John Costanzo. I met John approximately 25 years ago while I was working as a CPA/Auditor for Deloitte and Touche. I had a mutual friend who worked with John and the United States Secret Service, and he introduced us one night that we all went out together. I was immediately struck by John's larger than life presence and personality, and he quickly became one of my closest friends. As the years passed, I grew to deeply admire John for his deep sense of commitment to this country, incredible loyalty, and unflappable integrity. John proved to me over and over that his friendship was an unbreakable bond that he would never betray. I observed his incredible devotion to his family and I was in awe by the degree to which he revered his father.

In life, human beings are fallible...we are not perfect creatures and I believe that we should constantly endeavor to improve ourselves in every possible aspect: physically, intellectually, spiritually, and morally. There have been times in my life where I was faced with a moral dilemma of some sort or the other. Because I recognize that I am not perfect, I can admit that sometimes in those moments, my first instinct was not the best...and whenever I faced with such a situation, I often thought of the acronym "WWJD" ... "What Would Jesus Do?" After meeting John, becoming so close to him, and being so impacted by his presence in my life, when faced with moral dilemmas I often, anecdotally, modified that acronym in my mind to "What Would John Do?" In short, John was my idol and embodied everything that I wanted to be both as a professional, as man, and as a human being.

Because of that, I was inspired to change careers. Despite spending six years in college earning my Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and M.B.A, 2 years studying rigorously for the CPA Examination, and working five years to advance in public accounting, I wanted to be like John...so much so that I took a significant pay cut and applied to the United States Secret Service.

John, being the loyal friend that he is, guided and assisted me every step of the way. And with his guidance I soon was proudly accepted to become a United States Secret Service Special Agent. From that point on, everything I did was in an effort to emulate him. John, in the desire to emulate his father as well as honor his father's legacy as a highly respected and decorated DEA Agent, eventually transferred to the Drug Enforcement Administration. However, I continued to view John as a role model, and often sought his counsel throughout the remainder of my career. John was my mentor and, thanks in no small part to him, I enjoyed what I consider to be a very successful career.

I married my wife in 2009, and proudly asked John to be my Best Man...and that is exactly what he has been ever since the day I met him. Were, God forbid, something to happen to my wife and I, I would be proud to have John raise my children because, not only is he an incredible man, but I have seen firsthand what an incredible father figure he has been to his nieces and nephews.

Your Honor, I write this letter to you in the hopes that you will, in some small part, take the things I have said into consideration when imposing sentence on John. Just as I have molded my life after his, he has molded his after his father. I can assure you, without any doubt in my mind whatsoever, that John is already enduring the greatest possible punishment...which is the overwhelming feeling that he has humiliated his father, and disgraced his family name. I humbly implore your Honor for mercy.

Sincerely and respectfully,



Dennis McCarty

To: Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse

Dear Judge Oetken,

The purpose of this letter is to provide a character reference for Mr. John Costanzo Jr. whom I have known as a friend, brother, and professional associate for 25 years.

I first met John in 1999 when I was assigned to the Miami Field Office of the United States Secret Service. I was a young African American agent who had just arrived into a strange city (Miami), alone, anxious, nervous, and financially destitute. I did not know anyone, I had no family, no friends nor did I speak the prominent language of Spanish in Miami-in fact although I was 25, I resembled a 18 year old kid just setting off on his own to navigate this thing called life -or federal service career with no guidance nor support.

A little background on the office environment at that time in Miami. I was one of 4 African American agents (out of 170 agents) in the entire office at the time and the youngest of all. I had nothing in common personally and sometimes professionally with my peers. I wasn't even acknowledged by my colleagues and associates. I was just in a lot of peoples eyes a "quota" that the USSS had to meet- a guy who got the job due to an Affirmative Action not due to my efforts or abilities. A common comment or joke that was said to me on many occasions was" hey make sure you don't make a mistake and get confused and shoot Townsend out there in the streets-we'll lose our token". I was constantly ridiculed and ostracized by the senior agents and leadership. In short- I just didn't fit in to the good old boy network that was alive and prevalent in those days. Which led me to decide to end this honorable new career prematurely and return back to Georgia where I had recently moved from. On the day I was headed into a small office for the privacy I would need in order to to call and reconnect with my former colleagues in the Atlanta Police Department (I was making arrangement's to resign from the USSS and return back to APD), I hear in the biggest baritone voice " hey man -you might be too pretty to help me with this operation -but I need your assistance on a surveillance on a side of town that my big Italian a** will stick out in-Oh and I'm John by the way". I hung up the phone to see this 6'3 big Italian linebacker guy, with hair gel in his hair so thick that it would catch fire if he was in the sun to long smiling at me. I asked for the details-in which he replied " I will brief you on the way black beauty". With that I rounded up my gear and headed out with agent Costanzo and haven't looked back since and I have now been with the USSS for 25 years due to that first interaction with John.

I never told him I was on the phone attempting to offer my resignation that day he saw me. I never told him that because of him and his acknowledgment of me, his positive attitude for me, his kindness towards me, his frankness, his trust in me, his confidence in me, and his un-biased attitude toward me, changed my entire outlook, trajectory on my career and my future. I never expressed to him the impact that day, that moment had on me. Later that night after the surveillance John drops me off at my apartment, he steps in for a minute and see's that I don't have any furniture-only a small TV on a wooden stand and an air mattress. He says" kid you're living like a college student bro". I explain to him I have been living in the apartment for about 10 months but I can't afford the rent and furniture just yet.

A few days later John shows up at my apartment with a full living room set that he gives me from his apartment- when I ask what he's going to use for his apartment? He replies" maybe I'll go back to living like a college student too for a while until you get on your feet". That selflessness and compassion for others has only cemented our brotherhood. John Costanzo has always been helpful, respectful, and compassionate to others, even through these current problems. He has always helped me when I needed help and believes in values like individuality, duty, loyalty, strength of character, courage, respect, a man's word, trust and selflessness. In the many volatile situations him and I have found ourselves in while living and working in Miami, throughout the US, throughout the world, I knew without a doubt that John would lay down his life for me and go before me, he would go before any of us to make sure we got home safe.

Finally, before you render sentencing and take my brother John Costanzo away from me. I respectfully request you take into consideration the positive impact he has had in my life and the lives of his family and I humbly request you consider this character letter.

" In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute" - Thurgood Marshall.

Sincerely,

Michael Townsend

Guillermo Aleman

December 14, 2023

The Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Honorable Judge Oetken:

At the DEA academy I learned the following expression: "Big cases, big problems; small cases, small problems; no cases, no problems." Contrary to popular belief, few agents work in big cases. I would estimate that no more than five percent of agents take these cases on. It's not that agents are lazy or afraid to take on liability. In my opinion, it is because of the complexity of the work and the toll that it exerts on the agents and their families. John Costanzo was one of the five percent who never shied away from his duty.

I have been with the DEA for 21 years and I have known John since 2008 when we met after being assigned to the same group at the DEA Miami Office in Homestead, Florida. We immediately clicked and began working together. To say that he helped shape who I am today is an understatement. I am truly grateful for both what I learned from him as well as our friendship.

As one of the few Spanish speaking agents, up to the point that I began working with John, my experience had been mainly as an undercover agent who communicated with drug traffickers. I was not a case agent, and I did not have experience managing a complex investigation. John Costanzo provided me the opportunities to grow in my career and gain the experience to take the lead on cases and to become a supervisor in the agency.

John and I worked together for many years, mainly combatting drug trafficking organizations operating out of Cali, Colombia. We indicted high level targets and seized millions of dollars in furtherance of the agency's mission and the interests of our country.

In 2013 I was promoted and left the DEA office in Homestead. John was promoted a year later, and we were assigned to separate groups. John was assigned to one of the most important groups at the DEA's Miami office. Every time that I spoke with him he would tell me how excited he was to be in the

group and the opportunity that he had to mentor younger agents and task force officers. As he had done with me years earlier, John enjoyed teaching the younger agents how to effectively work their complex money laundering investigations.

John and I were reunited at work in 2020 when we were assigned to the same section at DEA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. John was an excellent agent, but he was even better as a Staff Coordinator managing money laundering investigations throughout the country. He provided oversight and guidance to the agents in the field.

John wasn't just an excellent agent; he is an excellent person. The kind of person that I view as a role model. As our professional relationship developed, we also became close friends. When John would visit my home, he would bring cannoli's for my family to enjoy. Whenever we would talk, he would ask about my family. Over the years, as friends do, John would listen if I encountered a conflict and offer his counsel. Just like with work, John never shied away from the difficult tasks, and he has always been there for me when I have most needed a friend.

Your honor, as you can see from what I have written here, I know John intimately. I know who he is as a professional and as a person. Although he is an admirable individual, he is a human being, and he made a mistake. I know that John is remorseful for his actions, which go completely against everything that he has done throughout his life. As you deliberate on the most appropriate punishment for John, I humbly ask that you take into account the totality of his life, his admirable career in service to our country, his selfless dedication as a mentor and friend, and the positive impact that he has had on the lives and careers of so many people.

[REDACTED] To the extent possible, please allow John to be there for his role model.

Sincerely yours,



Guillermo Aleman

Luis A. Infante Jr.

February 3, 2024

The Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Honorable Judge Oetken,

I am writing to you in regards to my friend John Costanzo. I would like to share with you my experience of knowing John since 2012, but first I will introduce myself to you. I started my law enforcement career as a New York City Police Officer in 1998 and in 2001 as a New York State Trooper. I have been employed as a Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) since 2002. Currently I am a Supervisory Special Agent with DEA and I have been in this position for approximately two years. Upon graduating from the DEA Academy, I was assigned to the New York Field Division and worked there until approximately 2011. At that time, I was selected and reassigned by the DEA to a position as an Assistant Country Attaché at the San Salvador Country Office (CO), El Salvador. After two years working in the San Salvador CO, I was reassigned by DEA to the Homestead Resident Office (RO) in the Miami Field Division.

Upon arriving to the Homestead RO in 2013, I met John for the first time. At that time, John was a senior agent at the office and I was a newly arrived senior agent myself. John was very welcoming to me and assisted me with my transition as a newly transferred agent into the office by showing me around the office and our area of enforcement responsibility. In a short time, John and I became friends. We started spending time together by going to lunch during work. We later began meeting up with other friends during the weekends for dinner at restaurants in Miami. During this time, I was able to get to know John better. I learned that John is kind and generous person. John and I spoke many of times about our career goals, friendships, and our families. I am a father of two young daughters and John and I would spend time talking about my little girls. John, having no children, would always tell me how lucky I was that I had children to love and cherish. I appreciated that very much from him! I know John as a person that recognizes the importance of love for his family and friends, and he is very loyal to them!

Approximately a year later, John was promoted to a Supervisory Special agent and left the Homestead RO to the Miami FD to his new assignment. John and I remained in touch even after his promotion. Although John was very busy running one of the most active and successful DEA Groups in

the Miami FD, John always took the time to call me and give me advice on my career goal of being promoted as a supervisor. John played an important role with me eventually being promoted.



Your honor, I am respectfully asking you to please have leniency for John. He is a man who has made a mistake and I know he is remorseful. I hope that by me writing this letter to you and describing what I know about John and his character it will assist you with deciding on an appropriate sentencing for him. Thank you for your time your Honor.

Sincerely,



Luis Infante

December 3, 2023

Daniel H. Aleman

[REDACTED]

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

My name is Daniel H. Aleman, and I am a former Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent, who was supervised by John Costanzo for approximately two years. John has always been a loving and caring individual since we first met. John and I maintained a friendship even after I was promoted out of his group which lasted approximately eight years.

I am writing this letter to cast John as a respectable member of the community and a genuine person; John is a patriot, a great friend, and someone who served the community as a law enforcement professional for over 20 years.

To give you a personal example, before John became my supervisor, I was disillusioned with the prospect of becoming a DEA supervisor. As a newly promoted supervisor, John quickly realized his group was lacking the drive and teamwork mentally necessary to achieve great success. John brought to the group, the teamwork mentality reminiscing of the comradery I experienced in the military. It was then that his leadership and mentorship inspired me to become a DEA supervisor.

Our friendship continued after I became a supervisor, as I often relied on John for professional and personal advice. In 2021, when my older brother died, John provided his unconditional support by sending a very thoughtful flower arrangement to my brother's memorial service. Earlier this year upon learning that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

Unfortunately, John was convicted and he is now hopeful for mercy during sentencing from you. I hope that this letter can convince you that John is a good person, and this testimony will be taken into consideration.

Yours truly,

Daniel H. Aleman

Daniel H. Aleman.

January 12, 2024

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge
SDNY
Thurgood Marshall
U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
NY, NY 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

This letter concerns John Costanzo Jr. I have known the Costanzo Family since 1969 when I attended the Narcotics School as a Drug Enforcement Administration (formerly Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs) Special Agent with John Sr. I became very close friends with John and Elaine Costanzo socially as well as working in NY with John for many years. Our friendship continued even when we both were assigned to other countries to work as narcotics agents.

Both John and Elaine are moral, religious individuals, serving their country in many areas and avenues. Their children John Jr. (Johno) and Danielle continued their parents moral values.

John Jr. served initially with Secret Service and then wanting to be more proactive, joined DEA. I observed him growing up and in his professional life. Fluent in Italian, he served in several areas of the world. He was an energetic, smart, and resourceful Special Agent, highly thought of by his peers and supervisors. Judge Oetken, I can attest to the fact that I am a good judge of people after 6 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, 26 years with DEA, and 10 years as a State Narcotics Agent.

Taught to be aggressive (a trait that most Narcotics Agents embrace), I had contact with John Jr. over the years during our respective careers. His assistance was always time generous, professional, and he frequently mentioned we were "like family."

Judge Oetken, I could continue with my laudatory comments of John Costanzo Jr., but will also consider the Court's time and close with these words.

John Costanzo Jr. proved himself for many years to be a moral, honest man taught well by his family. My personal observation is his many years as a successful agent speaks for itself. He is a good man.

I request you take my endorsement into consideration in your judgment.

Sincerely,


Michael Powers

Former USMC
DEA Agent/Supervisor
State of Florida Sr. Narcotics Agent

Jesus M Hernandez

[REDACTED]

February 2, 2024

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Re: Character letter of John Costanzo

Dear Judge Oetken,

I would like to provide you some insight into how I met John Costanzo, how long I've known him, and the moments in life when you remember why you call and remember some people as genuine and profound friend.

I met John sometime around 1999 through a family member (retired Special Agent with US Secret Service) Greg Naranjo. I met John at the Miami International Airport where I was assigned as a Special Agent with the DEA. After Greg introduced us, John and I hit it off in a good way. His joyful personality and constant funny stories made the way to what turned out to be a great friend. We are still today and always stay friends until I am called home by our Lord.

Throughout the years, we would work together in joint investigations that would allow us to realize our professional side of our relationship. Those were years between 2000 through 2017. John was assigned in the Miami Field Division and I was in Panama and/or Miami FD, but I had always noticed John's diligent work and leadership methods so that all

parties would participate in order to accomplish the investigations goals of arresting the parties involved with the case. John had always displayed responsible work behavior and lead by example by utilizing all the methods available to the DEA in initiating and following up on the cases that he worked on. Many successful cases occurred.

On a personal basis, John is one of the most honest, caring and responsive persons that I have ever met in my life. Throughout the years, I would spend many days, weeks and cumulative years together with John and I become astonished with the great amount of brotherly love that this man has for all people.



But, those incidents are just mine with John. John is the type of man who goes beyond the extra mile for anyone in need. There have been other Special Agents (SA) like when a retired SA had cancer, was in chemotherapy and would go to work sporadically. This sick SA fainted in the office. John ran to his aid and picked him up, yelled to others to call 911 and carried this sick SA to the front parking lot and waited for the Rescue team to arrive. After they stabilized him, John went to the hospital to check on him constantly.

In yet another incident, an SA who was assigned within my group (as well John was assigned to our group) was very ill with IBS and other severe intestinal conditions. John knew this agent's conditions and was constantly helping out with his condition. One morning, this agent did not show up for work nor did he call to advise of his disposition. John immediately left the office alone and knocked on this agent's apartment door for a few minutes until the agent opened the door. The agent had become very ill, constantly bleeding and extremely weak. John physically assisted this agent, placed him into the car and drove him to the hospital. After two days in the hospital, the doctor's advised us that if the agent had not been brought to the hospital on that day, his conditions could would have worsened and eventually, he would have passed away. Thanks to John's constant vigilance of other's needs, many people have probably been saved, directly or indirectly.

John and I assisted a young man who lost control of his car and ran off the Florida Turnpike and his car flew into a deep ditch where the car laid on it's roof. John ran down that embankment and pulled the young man from the vehicle. The man was in shock but was very grateful for the help. John and I kept him calm until Rescue arrived.

I know that I owe much of the loving relationship that I have with my family because of the love that I would see between John's own family especially during my long divorce. He never stepped away from anyone in need. His presence was always welcomed because we knew he would always help any of us in whatever we needed.

There are many incidents that I could write to you about John, but the best way to describe John is to say that his heart for “loving his neighbor” is exactly where it is supposed to be. He is led by his love for God and displays it with the actions and work that he has provided to making this world a little bit less painful. I hope and pray that his love for his neighbors and God continues to grow and never ceases.

Sincerely,

Jesus M Hernandez (Jimmy)
Special Agent (Retired)
US Drug Enforcement Administration

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

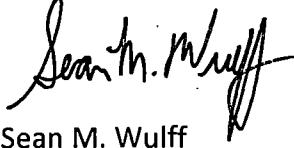
I first knew of John Costanza from his reputations as a remarkable investigator in the Miami Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). I met John for the first time on June 10, 2019, when we both reported to DEA Headquarters for the first time and where both assigned to the Financial Investigations Section. During my time working with John, I quickly realized we were like minded individuals who shared a similar upbringing and value system. While working together I often leaned on John for his knowledge and as a sounding board when confronted with complicated case matters. The work product that John provided to DEA while he was assigned to Headquarters was second to none. John quickly became the go to guy in the section and was often tasked with briefing upper management to include the Administrator on a regular basis and supervised our section while the Unit Chief was unavailable or tasked with something else.

I don't talk to John about his case because I still work for DEA and also because I contact him as a friend to see how he is doing with the rest of his life to include his father's health concerns. John has maintained utter grace while going through this entire process, because he leans on his family unit and I know he is more concerned for his father above all else.

Upon suddenly losing my own father in September 2022, John was one of the first people who reached out to me and was there for me. During that time John made me feel that my pain and grief were also his. John helped me more than I can explain or he would ever know. That was just John being his caring, sincere self.

I can confirm with all my being, that John Costanzo is a reliable, trustworthy, and truly decent person. In the years I have known John as a colleague and friend, I have come to consider him family. My sincerest hope is that your Honor consider who John is as tremendous human being while you make your decision.

Sincerely,



Sean M. Wulff

Dear Honorable Judge Oetken:

My name is Edwin Pagan and I have known John Costanzo for twenty-six plus years. I met John at the Police Academy in 1997. John and I had similar interests in sports, family, and making a difference in this world. I guess that is why we became so close. Throughout the academy we spent a lot of time studying, working out, having family dinners. I quickly became cognizant of why he loved his family so much. He was invested deeply in the needs and wants of his family. From his parents to his nieces and nephews, John was involved every step of the way. I have seen the growth of his involvement with his family. Whether it was babysitting when the kids were young, to now taking them to soccer practice or even teaching the twins how to drive a car. He is not only their uncle but a friend and mentor. I have been privy to many conversations John has had with his nieces and nephews. The love they have for each other is unmatched. There is nothing he wouldn't do for them. There have been many instances when we were hanging out watching a game or having lunch and he would receive a phone call to pick them up from a game or party. He always went, no matter what.

John has even influenced me to spend more quality time with my parents. I see how he is there for his sister and parents all the time. [REDACTED] I went the next day to see my father and make sure he's ok and seeing his doctor regularly. You must understand our fathers are our heroes. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
He doesn't want anyone else to do it. John wants to be there for his hero and has been since day one. John has always been family first and nothing will ever change that. Even through this is a difficult process he is going thru, he is still as present as ever. The strength he has shown has really changed my perspective on the battles I face. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
I can't count the times John has been there for my family too. Whether it was to help us move, moral support, or just being a good friend, he has gone beyond the call of duty. I remember when I went thru my divorce, I was in a dark place. There were days I wouldn't leave my couch and he was there to literally pick me up off the couch and take me to eat or to some event. He helped me more than anyone can imagine. He put things into perspective, encouraging me to keep moving forward. Telling me life is going to get better to keep pushing through. He has been to many of my family members funerals. He might not have been close to my aunt and uncles who passed, but everyone knows John because he is always present. My parents appreciated it and would always thank him for going.

I remember as a young police officer I entered the Big Brothers Program. My little brother that I was paired with came from a tough background. His parents were either in jail or on drugs. My little brother and I got really close after few years. He was very shy and not trusting of anyone. I remember after some time we could take our little brother out for a few hours. So one day I took him to play basketball and John came along. They both hit it off pretty good and we made plans to do it again the next weekend. My little brother, Maurice brought his friend Armando. Armando was in a gang and was thirsting for a father figure in his life. John and Armando hit it off pretty good. Armando was not in the Big Brother's program but the four of us became close. Basketball on the weekends became a ritual. One day we went to a local pizza place in the neighborhood. You must understand these kids know everyone and know who's in gangs. Well, that day we were being watched. You could feel the tension in the restaurant. I remember Armando getting up and talking to the other kids who were gang

members. Shortly thereafter, Armando came back and sat with us. The same group of kids brought us pizza that they weren't going to eat. Now this might not sound like much to a lot of people. But those gang members respected us for spending time with my little brother and Armando. These kids lived in houses where they slept on the floor and wondered where their next meal would come from. They had to fight for everything. Till this day John and I see my little brother who is now a grown man with a child. My little brother Maurice still thanks us for spending time and taking them to play ball and to Miami Heat games. John didn't have to participate, but he saw a kid in need and tried to make a difference in his life.

I worked with John for approximately twelve years in DEA as a Task Force Officer. I have never seen anyone so dedicated to his job as John was. Besides the dangerous work we did together, John was constantly helping agents better themselves. I remember when John became a group supervisor, he was always encouraging agents take the next step in their career. Whether it was testing to become a supervisor or helping an agent transfer, John was always making phone calls to assist the agents. Again, it may seem trivial, but I know other agents who would complain all the time because their bosses would not help them promote or transfer.

I have been attending church my whole life. I never push it on anyone. My church does an outreach every month. During Thanksgiving we pass out food to those less fortunate. During Christmas we take donated toys and distribute them in neighborhoods that are less fortunate. Other outreaches include painting, cutting grass, landscaping, etc. I remember the first time John wanted to come with me and help. It was the Christmas toy outreach, and he brought his niece and nephew. I remember their faces when they saw the neighborhoods we were going to. They were a little apprehensive. They might even have been scared to knock on those doors. But the first set of toys they passed out, cured all their fears. They saw the joy on those kids faces and their demeanor changed. I believe their lives changed. They became more appreciative of the life they live. They realized there are a lot of people in this world that need help. John took time out to make those kids in the neighborhood happy and teach a life lesson to the twins. We still participate in these outreaches and will continue to do so.

In summary, I can say with the utmost confidence that John does not have a bad bone in his body. He is a family first man and will always be that way. His dedication to his family, friends, and job is unmatched. I'm just glad I am able to participate during the holiday season with his family. I have a small family and it's very chaotic when all four of us are together. As a matter of fact, my mom and sister don't even speak to each other. So now, it's three of us for Thanksgiving, not four. I mention this for a reason. I never met my brother. He died before I was born. I was born exactly one year after he died. I believe God puts people in our lives for a reason. John is the brother I lost. He's more than a friend to me he is my family.

Thank You Your Honor for your time,

Edwin Pagan III

December 30, 2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken

I have had the privilege of knowing the Costanzo family and John Costanzo Jr. for over 40 years. I believe that my longstanding relationship with the family and John provides me with a unique insight into his character, values, and contributions to his friends and family.

I have consistently witnessed John's commitment to his family and his love for them. His role as a devoted son has been exemplary, and the love and respect he has for his family are truly heartwarming. John's kindness and thoughtfulness extends beyond his family, reaching friends and colleagues alike.

John has been a pillar of strength and kindness, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] John has consistently offered a helping hand
to those in need. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] John has proven time and again that he is a man of integrity and compassion. My family and I will never forget his kindness and friendship that he extended to us in our time of need and sorrow.

Additionally, I have witnessed the genuine affection and care that John has shown to his nieces and nephew. John has been a positive influence in their lives, by engaging with them, offering guidance, support and encouragement as they go through the challenges of growing up. John always makes time for them, participates in their milestones, celebrations and genuinely has an interest in their well-being. The positive influence he exhibits as an uncle contributes to the love, they have for him.

As a retired Associate Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, I have spoken with colleagues of John who have spoken highly of his strong work ethic, professionalism, loyalty and dedication to the job. His professional interaction with others has created a productive work environment.

I sincerely vouch for John Costanzo, Jr. character, emphasizing his professionalism, kindness, thoughtfulness, loyalty and the respect he has earned from family, friends and colleagues.

If the court requires any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



William Silvestri

Rafael Torres

[REDACTED]

December 20, 2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

I write this letter to you judge, to share my experiences with John Costanzo, who I've known for over 25 years, and to opine on his character, which is of the highest order. I came to know John in 1999; we worked together as Special Agents with the US Secret Service and quickly became friends. I write this without overstating or exaggerating: John is a man like no other. I've often envied the "code" by which he lives and have attempted to emulate him over the years, to no avail. By "code", I mean he is a man of honor; "honor" in the sense of the long-gone era of men who put family and friendship above all else and men who said what they meant and meant what they said.

The best way to explain this is to share a couple of personal experiences. I'm not easily moved to express personal feelings or discuss my personal life, but to the extent that sharing these deeply personal experiences will help John, who I love as a brother, I owe it to him to share these painful experiences.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In the following years, John became a Special Agent with the DEA and I transferred to the West Coast with the Secret Service, and eventually left the Service in 2011 to open a private security firm. No matter how negligent I was in maintaining the friendship, John always kept the bond strong by continually reaching out and always insisting that we get together when I'd visit Miami, which I often did to see family.

[REDACTED]

John's friendship during this past year has been essential. Despite

his legal problems over the past year, which would break most men, John has not showed a moment of worry or stress (for my sake) and has been the most selfless and supportive friend a man could hope for. Through this impossibly difficult time for John, he hasn't relied upon me once, but has selflessly offered all the support I've needed. "Don't worry about me. How are you?" is always the theme in our conversations.

Regarding the "honor" and "code" I referenced earlier, I believe John is the model of a loving and devoted son, brother, uncle, and friend, and I am honored to call him a friend and brother.

In deciding John's fate, I ask that you consider not only the impact he's had on my life and that of my family, but that you consider the impact he's had on the lives of countless others. To this day, Kasey is thankful for the influence John has had on our relationship. I believe John has a higher purpose in life, one he's yet to realize, and I hope you give strong consideration to the man he's been and the man he is yet to be.

December 6, 2023

Honorable J.Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken:

I offer the following remarks in support of John Costanzo Jr. and hope that they will prove favorable during your sentencing deliberations.

My name is Robert J Palombo Sr., a retired Senior Executive Service Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). During my 29 year career I served in multiple domestic and foreign offices, to include a six year tour in the Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR). Upon retirement I was hired by DEA as a Subject Matter Expert assigned to the DEA Special Operations Division's training unit. I served in that capacity for eleven years.

I have known John Jr since he was approximately three years old. At that time I was John Sr.'s partner in the DEA New York Division. I worked with John Sr until his reassignment to the DEA office in Milan, Italy. Our careers took different paths until we both retired in south Florida. At that time our families rekindled our friendship and socialized on a steady basis. It was also at that time that I became a friend of John Jr. who was in the process of entering a law enforcement career with the Indian Creek Police Department in south Florida. After approximately three years John Jr was accepted as a Special Agent with the United States Secret Service and remained there for approximately seven years at which time he applied for, and was accepted by DEA, a lifelong dream he finally attained. John Jr's experience as a local police officer and a Secret Service agent enabled him to gain the respect of both his peers and supervisors at DEA. He was a quick study and excelled as both an undercover officer and a money laundering expert. He was subsequently recognized for his expertise and was promoted to a Group Supervisor in the DEA Miami Division. During the ensuing years I had the occasion to observe John Jr in numerous social settings and must say that I was impressed by his confident demeanor and devotion to his mom, dad, sister, nieces and nephew. To this day he spends countless hours mentoring his nephew with sports and physical fitness.

During the past seven years, ending in August of this year, I was a Board member of the Association of Federal Narcotics Agents (AFNA), an organization comprised of present and former members of DEA. One of my responsibilities involved the recruitment and vetting of AFNA applicants. John Jr was oftentimes listed as a character reference by the applicant. On many occasions I attended AFNA functions at the Miami Division Office and had the opportunity to meet with John Jr and his team

members. During these meetings it was evident that he was highly regarded by both his subordinates and his upper management team.

In conclusion I can only say that the John Jr, convicted of the crimes for which he was charged, is not the John Jr that I have known all these years. As such I ask that you take into consideration the many qualities and positive contributions he has made to his family and drug law enforcement.

Respectfully yours,

Robert J Palombo Sr.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Judge Oetken,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my dear friend and former co-worker, John Costanzo. John and I first met when we were both hired as young secret service agents in Miami around 1999. We became friends right off the bat and have remained close friends over the years.

In all my time with John, whether at work or outside of work, I have found him to be nothing short of admirable and honorable. He is absolutely loyal and a joy to be around. As federal agents in Miami, he and I were often together in dangerous, or potentially dangerous, situations. I found his presence on these enforcement operations comforting because I knew John had my back. As a secret service agent, I was motivated by his work ethic, his success and his competence in working investigations.

Outside of work, John is a helpful and loyal friend who I can discuss anything with. At one period in my career, I encountered trouble shooting well at the range. John accompanied to a shooting range and was able to help me ameliorate the issue. After we both left the Secret Service for different agencies we would assist each other with investigations when our targets of investigation overlapped. When I was going through a divorce, he was always there to listen, display compassion and provide guidance and insight wherever he thought he was able to. On top of this, he offered me a place to stay if necessary. I have met his family several times and it is obvious that he is deeply devoted to his parents, his sister and his sister's children. John was at my wedding.

To wrap it up, I would say that on any day and at anytime I would, without hesitation, trust my three kids to his care.

I love my friend and I wish we were able to spend more time together, but my family and I moved out of the Miami area a few years ago.

I wish John all the best and will always be available to provide him help and support however he may need it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Craig Nowicki

November 20, 2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

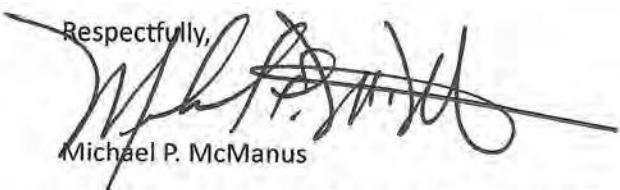
Dear Judge Oetken,

By way of background, I am a retired Special Agent with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). In 2004, I retired as the Chief of Operations for Mexico & Central America. I have been in practice as a Private Investigator for the past 19 years in south Florida. I have known the Costanzo family for the past 30 years. In the 1990's John Costanzo Sr. was one of my supervisors in the Miami Field Division.

Over the years, I have come to know Group Supervisor John Costanzo Jr. in personal settings as well as in a professional nature. I have always found him to be a person of high integrity who maintains the standards set forth by the DEA. In my professional opinion, as both a DEA Agent and now as a Private Investigator, I believe the area in question associated with this case is at best a "gray area". Retired DEA agents never stop trying to fight the war on drugs. In the cases I have been involved in over the years, I have prided myself with maintaining a professional relationship with current DEA Agents as well as retired agents.

The goal that I have had in handling these types of cases over the years has been to always assist the U.S. Government (USG) in furthering their fight in the drug war. When attorneys bring in retired agents as investigators, it is not typically designed to pick apart the USG's case, but more importantly, to evaluate how the client/defendant can potentially assist the DEA and USG in providing cooperation. This would then assist in a potential sentence reduction for the client. These types of case are designed to gather significant intelligence and assist the DEA in moving up the "food chain".

I strongly believe, based on my personal and professional relationship with Group Supervisor Costanzo, he did not intend to have this type of cooperation result in a criminal conspiracy for any financial gain, but to further the goals and objectives of the DEA.

Respectfully,

Michael P. McManus

DEA, Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC)

Madysen Hawkins

[REDACTED]

November 17, 2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

I would like to extend my gratitude towards your willingness to read my character reference for John Costanzo.

I met John only a few years ago and even though it has been a short period of time, his impact on my life has been immeasurable. When I was first introduced to John, it was under the pretense of meeting my parent's DEA agent friend and learning another possible avenue I could take career-wise. It seemed to be another simple interaction at that point in time but I did not realize my whole life was about to change.

Because of John, I am proud to say that I am halfway through the hiring process to become a Special Agent with the Secret Service. Who he is as a person and what he has accomplished as an agent finally gave me the courage to take the leap on my passion of becoming a public servant. However, he has not only inspired me but has been by my side the whole time. Regardless of what he has going on in his life, he continues to be my cheerleader and support system throughout this process. John Costanzo is more than just a mentor or a DEA agent I look up to; he has become part of my family and I wouldn't want it any other way.

Like I said before, that single moment of meeting John has created the most beautiful ripple effect on my life. If I were asked if I could go back in time and meet him all over again, I would say "yes" without hesitation. He is one of the most selfless, kind, respectful and inspiring people I know.

But with all due respect, Sir, it is a bit difficult to condense how amazing of a person he is in such a short letter. This is a man who goes above and beyond himself for others. It is easy to see that fact with his achievements as a DEA agent. But what you don't get to see is the courage and confidence he gave a directionless girl. The hope and pep talks he gave when she felt like she wouldn't succeed. And the strength to realize she has so much more to give in this lifetime. I don't think I will ever be able to repay him for his impact on my life but I am proud to say I get to know him.

Thank you again for taking the time to read my letter, Honorable Judge Oetken.

Respectfully,



Madysen Hawkins

Sheila Sperling

November 16, 2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

First and foremost, I would like to thank you, Sir, for taking the time to read my character reference for John Costanzo.

I met John 14 years ago at the gym & we instantly connected. I remember it like was yesterday - a handsome, very fit, confident, DEA agent working out at the gym with his mother!

John is very well respected and is all about his family when he is not working. He is an amazing son and he goes beyond when it comes to his parents by spending time with them on a daily basis.

He is also extremely close to his sister, who to this day, will tell you stories of their childhood and how her younger brother always protected and looked out for her.

He supports and encourages his nieces and nephews as if they were his own children. John participates in all of their personal, school, and sports functions. He works out with them, including, teaching them to be healthy and always encouraging them to work hard and do good in life.

Equally, he is as good as he is with family as with his friends.

John's love and respect for the DEA inspired and guided my daughter to apply and is currently in the application process to become a government agent.

These are just a couple of the many, many, many times John selflessly extended himself to help others. He finds the best in everyone and every scenario by offering nothing but positive outcomes.

Most of all anyone who knows John knows he is so humbled and is filled with so much respect, pride, and honor to be part of the DEA family where he serves to protect our great country.

Thank you again for your time Honorable Judge Oetken.

Respectfully,


Sheila Sperling

12/4/2023

Dear Judge Oetken,

My name is Karen Estrada, I am 46 years old, and I am a mother of two brave children: L [REDACTED], who is currently 8 years old, and T [REDACTED], who is 6 years old. Later, I will explain why I describe my children as brave. I wanted to start my letter by telling you a bit about myself so that you can know who I am—my character, my feelings, personality, and how I judge people.

From a young age, as the daughter of a Colombian immigrant and a widow mother, I have followed my mother's example of being hardworking, disciplined, not judging without reason or evidence, and being integral in my decisions. I have always respected the rules and my body. Therefore, I love and follow the rules of this country with loyalty and integrity, and I am proud to be an American. And that's how I educate my children.

[REDACTED]

My story with John began exactly 20 years ago. From the first day we met, I felt an energetic connection, hard to explain according to girls our age. But I knew that our lives would unite. And so began a relationship, or as I call it, a sisterhood. We started as two young people in our 20s, attending events, parties, lunches, walks in the park, movies, sports, or simply reading books, sharing family events. Gradually, he gained my trust, although it took him time to trust me enough to share his feelings or his professional career, which was just beginning. I remember clearly how he carefully chose his words to describe his job. I never questioned or asked much because his own character of integrity made it easy for me to be at ease around him and trust without asking.

With him, I learned even more about the discipline of exercise, eating healthy, and loving my body, qualities he has as a coach. It's an incredible quality of loving life. He taught me to respect every holiday event in this country and enjoy them with family, to organize my work and travels. My career also took a parallel course with his, as I worked for Gucci Corp. and began traveling to the Caribbean and Latin America. I remember every time I landed in Miami and shared my adventures with him. From the beginning until today, he has always supported me in my entrepreneurial ideas, love decisions, family decisions, or health decisions. I think there hasn't been a single week in 20 years that we have stopped talking, whether just to say hello or to share something about our lives. In him, I keep the vault of my secrets.

[REDACTED]

This is a quality of his—to always help others without expecting anything in return.

I met his father, mother, and sister a year after our friendship began. I want to share that I love them; they are examples, and I admire their family unity. I remember attending DEA's Christmas parties, and everyone congratulating his father for having such an exemplary son, the same with his mother. I felt proud because my brother was praised. The quality of family they are has always impressed me.

Many may wonder how this relationship is possible. The truth is, I am lucky that in 20 years of friendship, we have never fought. He has never disrespected me; on the contrary, he has been and continues to be the one who has taken care of me in every circumstance since we met. As a woman, it is a privilege to be able to experience this friendship.

I remember his happiness as an uncle, celebrating the birth of his nephews, just like my children. The happiness in his voice accompanying his sister to soccer games or the children's school activities. Always helping his sister or mom at home. Through his mom, I learned how she has been an essential influence for him. In him, spirituality, home principles, the importance of self-love, and John's emotional education are reflected. They say you know a man by his mother. And it's true in him. His mother is faith, tenderness, patience, and tranquility all in one. I have had the pleasure of experiencing these and many more qualities.

Something incredible is that John, over the years, took the opportunity to meet my mom and brother.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I had visits almost daily through a window from John. Daily calls, poems, prayers, songs with messages that I am a champion and an example for him. He helped my husband in moments of weakness, was a smile for my children, and helped us to not be victims but an example of struggle and family love.

It's in these moments, in situations of weakness, where we smell death in our noses and know who our true friends are. During these months, [REDACTED], he never complained to me about himself or his work. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I still remember my moments of weakness, hearing his voice, praying with him, listening to his faith—it gave me tranquility, made me laugh. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. With him, I learned to be proud of my work as a human being, best friend, mother, and wife.

There are so many stories, but this last one has marked our friendship, and that's why I call my friend my guardian angel. If in this life or the next I had to choose, I would choose him just as he is, with his honesty, his care, and his love for me.

I thank him from the bottom of my heart for being the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], for being my faithful friend, and teaching me to be myself and believe in my light. Just as the light I see and feel in him.

For this, I know he is the most integral person I have ever met.

I appreciate you reading my 20-year story of love, trust, and protection.

Karen Estrada

Alexander Wertheim



11/15/2023

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

RE: JOHN COSTANZO

Dear Judge Oetken,

I was blessed to have John Costanzo come into my life in 2010. We were introduced to each other at the gym in Miami, Florida. I have met so many people in my lifetime, and have developed many relationships, with many people, and I must say I have never met anybody as SPECIAL as John.

If I have to describe John with one word it would be (VALUES) a person's principals or standards of behavior; one's judgement of what is important in life.

A minute does not go by without John thinking about everyone else except himself. He loves helping everyone, the values his parents have instilled in him go to another level. He is an Alpha, so proud and his only concerns in life are about not letting anybody down, his devotion to his profession and Country, his loyalty and love to his Family and Friends, I can go on for days writing about his qualities. He is One of a Kind. It is impossible to understand unless you could have the opportunity to be blessed to have a moment with John.

I look forward to speaking or seeing John daily. Every day our bond becomes stronger, he makes me a better Man, Husband and Father.

If you would like to discuss further, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Alexander

Eric V. Lineiro

[REDACTED]

DAVIDHOUSE

Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

March 28, 2024

Dear Honorable Judge Oetken,

I am writing this letter in strong support of John Costanzo who is facing sentencing before your esteemed court. I have had the privilege of knowing John for several years, during which time I have come to respect him deeply both as a professional, as an active member of my church, and as a person of outstanding moral character.

John has dedicated most of his entire life in service to our country as a decorated agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Throughout his tenure, he consistently exhibited qualities of integrity, diligence, and skillful commitment to enforcing the law in an effort to keep our nation and communities safe. His contributions to combating drug trafficking and organized crime, many of which are historic at the DEA, have earned him numerous awards and commendations for his service. His name and reputation are well regarded at the Agency.

Beyond John's professional accomplishments, I have had the opportunity to witness firsthand his integrity and compassion in his interactions with others. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to helping raise his niece and nephew, he demonstrates a genuine concern for the well-being of those around him. He is also extremely humble and I have noted he is not fascinated with status or material possessions.

I am the managing director of The David House Agency, an international crisis firm that specializes in rescuing American citizens from wrongful imprisonments abroad. I founded the firm after my own high-profile wrongful imprisonment in 2006 in which I was sentenced to a 30-year prison term in Nicaragua for a crime I did not commit. Books and movies have been made about my story and I have dedicated my life to seeking justice on behalf of others. I would not be writing this letter if I believe John was a criminal.

I believe that John is a person of exceptional character who has positively impacted the lives of many through selfless service. It is my sincere hope that Your Honor will take into consideration his years of dedicated service and his sterling reputation as a law enforcement professional when determining an appropriate sentence.

Thank you for considering my perspective, and for your careful deliberation in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Eric V. Lineiro



Honorable J. Paul Oetken
U.S. District Judge, SDNY
Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Oetken,

My name is Francesco Zampogna. I write this letter on behalf of my family. My wife Francisca & my sons Gennaro and Franco(due February). John Costanzo is a dear friend of ours. Although it has only been 3 years since we met, our friendship grew quickly with our Italian heritage, values and multitude of common interests.

John is the most accountable gym partner I have had in my 25 years of training. Additionally, our life missions are aligned. Be kind, work hard and help others. Sometimes to our detriment.

John's most remarkable quality is his love and care for his family. He watches over all of them like an air traffic controller. I am sure he is considered a second father to his nieces, nephew and Godchildren. From school assignments, family quarrels, Sunday mass, soccer games, training sessions, airport runs and family gatherings; John is present.

It brings me to tears, joy and sorrow, to have the opportunity to write this letter. I am honored to be included in this process.

I have been blessed with an amazing family and the gift of loyal friends. John is one of them. We have not known each other for a very long time, but the mutual respect and connection is powerful. I am sure many have felt this immediate impact.

If you couldn't already tell how many people genuinely care for this man, it is because he is always present and ready to lend a helping hand. He is the finest example of a family member and friend that exists.

John's faith and his unwavering dedication to his family remain his pillars of strength.

Many blessings for you and your family this holiday season. Happy New Year!

Cordially,

Francesco, Francisca Gennaro & Franco Zampogna